CLAIMS

We claim:

1   1. A system for enhancing a content object, comprising:

2   a system for downloading a network resource from a host server to a client;

3   a system for downloading an enhancement mechanism with the network resource,

4   wherein the enhancement mechanism includes:

5   a loading module for requesting and loading the content object from a content

6   server to the client; and

7   an enhancement module for altering an output format of the content object.

1   2. The system of claim 1, wherein the network resource is a web page.

1   3. The system of claim 2, wherein the content object is an ad.

1   4. The system of claim 3, wherein the ad comprises an ad in an industry standard format.

1   5. The system of claim 2, wherein the content object is an image.

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1   6. The system of claim 2, wherein the enhancement mechanism comprises a plug-in embedded

2   in the web page.

1   7. The system of claim 6, wherein the plug-in comprises an applet.

1   8. The system of claim 1, wherein the content server is an ad server.

1   9. The system of claim 8, wherein the ad server is a third party server.

1   10. The system of claim 8, wherein the host server acts as the ad server.

1   11. The system of claim 1, wherein the enhancement module converts the content object into a

2   game.

1   12. The system of claim 3, wherein the enhancement module converts the ad into a game.

1   13. The system of claim 12, wherein the game overlays the ad.

1   14. The system of claim 12, wherein the game partitions the ad into a plurality of smaller images

2   that can be manipulated by an end user.

1   15. The system of claim 12, wherein the game resides in an area outside of the ad.

1   16. The system of claim 1, wherein the enhancement module instructs the host server to retrieve

2   the content object.

1   17. The system of claim 1, further comprising a proxy system that obtains the content object from

2   the content server on behalf of the client.

1   18. The system of claim 2, wherein the enhanced content object is created by replacing an

2   embedded ad with the embedded enhancement module.

1   19. The system of claim 1, wherein the enhancement module alters the output format of the

2   content object by providing an informing enhancement that requests a user action.

1   20. The system of claim 1, wherein the content object is altered in real-time.

1   21. The system of claim 1, wherein the content object is loaded into the enhancement

2   mechanism in one of a plurality of formats that do not require customization.

1   22. An enhancement mechanism for enhancing content, comprising:

2   a system for loading a content object, wherein the content object comprises data stored in

3   a predefined format;

4   an enhancement module selected from a plurality of enhancement modules, wherein each

5   enhancement module causes a unique alteration of the loaded content object; and

6   an application programming interface for converting the data from the predefined format

7   to a format compatible with the selected enhancement module.

1   23. The enhancement mechanism of claim 22, wherein at least one of the enhancement modules

2   converts the content object into a game.

1   24. The enhancement mechanism of claim 22, wherein at least one of the enhancement modules

2   comprises an information enhancement.

1   25. The enhancement mechanism of claim 22, wherein the content object comprises an ad.

1   26. The enhancement mechanism of claim 22, wherein the system for loading the content object,

2   the application programming interface, and the selected enhancement module are contained

3   within a web page.

1   27. The enhancement mechanism of claim 22, wherein the system for loading the content object

2   and at least one enhancement module are implemented as Java applets.

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1   28. A program product stored on a recordable media that, when executed, comprises:

2   means for selecting an enhancement module from a plurality of enhancement modules;

3   means for installing an enhancement mechanism into a requested web page that is to be

4   downloaded to a client, wherein the enhancement mechanism includes the selected enhancement

5   module; and

6   proxy means for retrieving a content object on behalf of the client and causing the content

7   object to be passed to the client.

1   29. The program product of claim 28, wherein at least one of the plurality of enhancement

2   modules converts the content object into a game.

1   30. The program product of claim 29, wherein the content object is selected from the group

2   consisting of: an ad or an image.

1   31. The program product of claim 28, wherein at least one of the plurality of enhancement

2   modules appends an information enhancement to the content object.

1   32. The program product of claim 28, wherein the proxy means causes an address of the content

2   object to be modified to point to an address of a host server.

1   33.   A method of enhancing content, comprising the steps of:

2   requesting a resource;

3   retrieving and processing the resource, wherein the resource includes an enhancement

4   mechanism; and

5   processing the enhancement mechanism, including the steps of:

6   retrieving a content object;

7   transferring data from the content object to an enhancement module; and

8   executing the enhancement module such that the data from the content object is

9   presented in an enhanced format.

1   34. The method of claim 33, wherein the resource comprises a web page, and the resource is

2   retrieved from a server.

1   35. The method of claim 33, wherein the content object comprises an ad.

1   36. The method of claim 33, wherein the content object comprises an image.

1   37. The method of claim 33, wherein the enhancement module converts the content object into a

2   game.

1   38. The method of claim 33, wherein the enhancement module comprises an informing

2   enhancement that appends a message to the content object that requests an action from an end

3   user.

1   39. The method of claim 38, wherein the message is overlaid on top of the content object.

1   40. The method of claim 38, wherein the message is appended outside of the content object.

1   41. The method of claim 38, wherein the message is displayed intermittently with the content

2   object.